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RAPID SOCIO-CULTURAL CHANGE AND STUDENT MENTAL HEALTH--A CROSS-CULTURAL COMPARISON.

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THE EFFECTS OF RAPID SOCIO-CULTURAL CHANGE AND INTER-GENERATIONAL CONFLICT OF VALUES ON THE ROLE IDENTITY OF TWO GROUPS OF ADOLESCENT STUDENTS ARE COMPARED. THE TWO GROUPS ARE LIBERIANS OF TRIBAL ORIGIN AND CREE INDIANS OF NORTH-CENTRAL QUEBEC. CLINICAL MATERIAL IS PRESENTED TO ILLUSTRATE THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN IDENTITY CONFLICT AND PSYCHOLOGICAL DYSADAPTATION EXPERIENCED BY STUDENTS OF BOTH GROUPS. COMPARISONS ARE DRAWN ALONG THESE PARAMETERS--(1) ATTITUDES TOWARD EDUCATION, (2) INFLUENCE OF BELIEFS IN WITCHCRAFT, AND (3) DEFENSE MECHANISMS TO COPE WITH ROLE CONFLICT. ATTITUDES TOWARD EDUCATION SEEMED TO CORRESPOND TO THE STUDENT'S ACHIEVEMENT LEVEL. UNLIKE LIBERIAN STUDENTS, THE CREE DO NOT ATTRIBUTE RESPONSIBILITY FOR WITCHCRAFT TO THEIR OWN KIN. LIBERIANS USE DENIAL AND PROJECTION DEFENSES, WHILE THE CREE USE INTROJECTIVE DEFENSES. PRELIMINARY STUDY SUGGESTS THAT ATTEMPTS OF BOTH GROUPS TO RESOLVE IDENTITY CONFLICT FOLLOW--(1) POLARIZATION TOWARD THE IDENTITY MODEL REPRESENTED BY THE URBAN MIDDLE CLASS, OR (2) POLARIZATION TOWARD THE OLDER GENERATION, OR (3) A SYNTHESIS OF BOTH. FACTORS DETERMINING THE DEGREE OF CONFLICT ARE LISTED. THIS PAPER WAS PRESENTED AT THE AMERICAN ORTHOPSYCHIATRIC ASSOCIATION CONVENTION (CHICAGO, MARCH 23, 1968). (PH)

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RAPID SOCIO-CULTURAL CHANGE AND STUDENT MENTAL HEALTH: A CROSS-CULTURAL COMPARISON*

by Ronald M. Wintrob, M.D.**

* The material on Liberian students reported in this paper derives from the experience of the author during two years as medical director of Liberia's only psychiatric unit, the Catherine Mills Rehabilitation Center, and director of the Division of Mental Health of the National Public Health Service of the Republic of Liberia. Support for this work was provided in part by the International Committee Against Mental Illness, Dr. Nathan S. Kline, President. The material relating to the Cree Indians is drawn from the author's subsequent participation in the ongoing inter-disciplinary research of the McGill-Cree Project, Programme in the Anthropology of Development. Support for this project has been provided principally by the Canadian Department of Forestry and Rural Development. The author has received additional support from the Laidlaw Foundation (Canada). The manuscript has been prepared and much of the research conducted during the author's tenure as Research Fellow of the Medical Research Council of Canada. Suggestions and comments by Drs. R. Prince, H.B.M. Murphy, E.D. Wittkower, and N.A. Chance, and by Messrs. P.S. Sindell, R. Pothier, and I. La Rusic have contributed to the preparation of this paper. The author gratefully acknowledges the support and assistance of these individuals and organizations.

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CG 002 115

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I. INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this paper is to compare the effects of rapid socio-cultural change on the role identity of two groups of adolescent students from dramatically different culture areas, but sharing certain characteristics. The two groups of students are Liberians of tribal origin (West Africa), and Cree Indians of north-central Quebec (Canada). They share the following characteristics: 1) their environments are undergoing rapid economic development with concomitant social and cultural changes, 2) they are key participants in the inter-generational conflict of values that has accompanied the declining importance of the extended family and traditional tribal authority structure, and 3) education has become a central focus of the inter-generational conflict, being highly valued by youth and negatively or ambivalently regarded by "traditional" adults of the tribe. Clinical material is presented to illustrate the relationship between identity conflict and psychological dysadaptation experienced by students of both groups. The data is drawn from the author's recent experience as director of mental health services in Liberia (1964-66), and from his current participation in interdisciplinary research among the Quebec Cree Indians of the Waswanipi and Mistassini bands.

II. LIBERIA: TRIBAL AUTHORITY, THE CHALLENGE OF EDUCATION AND THE THREAT OF WITCHCRAFT

Liberia is a country of more than a million people located on the west coast of Africa. It has been an independent republic for more than a century. The population comprises some twenty major tribes in addition to the relatively small but socially and politically dominant group of "Americo-Liberians," descendents of approximately ten thousand American slaves and free Negroes who established settlements along the coast during the mid-nineteenth century. Although education up to high school level has been available for many years in the capital city of Monrovia and several towns along the coast, for the vast majority of the tribal population the possibility of obtaining an education has been a very recent phenomenon. Large-scale exploitation of the timber, rubber and mineral resources of the country during the past fifteen years has resulted in the rapid development of roads, a communications network and administrative centers. The government has undertaken an enormous expansion of educational facilities in the 'interior' of Liberia in the wake of these developments.[1]

The tribal population of Liberia is experiencing profound changes. Traditional legal, political, and religious institutions, such as the Poro and Sande societies (Harley, 1941; Nolan, 1966; Gibbs, 1963), while by no means in eclipse,

are declining in authority. The traditional economic system of subsistence farming and fishing based on the cooperative effort of the extended family is giving way to wage employment at mines and plantations. Geographic mobility and increasing urbanization that accompany this occupational shift have contributed to the weakening of extended family ties.

As a consequence of this rapid process of change, with its demand for new skills and its promise of new rewards directly related to educational achievement, the desire for education among tribal youth has steadily mounted. Competition is intense and anxiety-provoking. Among Liberians there is widespread belief that success engenders jealousy and resentment, and that the highest academic achievers may be subject to retaliation by their less successful peers through the agency of witchcraft. The belief prevails that the jealous student or his family may obtain the help of a secret society such as the Lightning or the Snake society, or of a "country Zo," an individual regarded as particularly knowledgeable in the preparation and use of medicines for healing or for witchcraft, to bring illness, misfortune, and even death to the resented individual. Successful students are especially fearful of retaliation in the form of mental illness induced by witchcraft. Because of the pervading belief that any individual has the potential to invoke malevolent spirits,

interpersonal relations are characterized by a high level of suspicion and guardedness. Students soon suspect that they are being "poisoned," (witched) when they develop a low grade but persistent fever or intestinal disturbance. This belief is internalized early in the child's life and reinforced when parents explain his minor illnesses as attempts by malevolent individuals to witch him.

Hypochondriacal preoccupations are very common among students, and are almost invariably associated with complaints of weakness, fatigue, headache or numbness in the head, nightmares and insomnia.[2] A further group of symptoms relate more specifically to feelings of inadequacy and fears of failure in academic performance: inability to concentrate, blurred vision, feelings of loneliness or hopelessness, and rumination over falling grades.

These students are drawn to Monrovia from all over Liberia. Their ages range from early teens to late twenties, and their academic level ranges from elementary school through university. But for all of them the desire for educational advancement is a primary motivating force.

During the early stages of acculturative influence, authority figures within the extended family and the tribe are hostile to education. They see it as a threat to the stability and continuity of traditional tribal institutions. These

institutions are safeguarded primarily through the power of the Poro and Sande secret societies. Gibbs (1962) has stressed the inherent conservatism of these societies, and pointed to d'Azevedo's contention that one of their major functions is to preserve the status quo; to maintain adherence to traditional norms, even in situations of acculturation or social flux (d'Azevedo, 1962). The central role of the Poro and Sande secret societies demands that pre-adolescents spend several years at initiation "bush school." A bush school is organized by the Poro or Sande society at intervals of approximately seven years, and all non-initiated younger members of the tribe must participate (Gay and Cole, 1967). Beliefs and values essential to the traditional cultural organization are inculcated during this period of strict seclusion from the outside world, and among the most fundamental values is that of unquestioning submission to authority (Harley, 1950). Gay and Cole (1967) assert that in terms of the traditional (in this case, of the Kpelle tribe) culture, "knowledge is primarily a possession of the elders. Education is concrete and non-verbal, concerned with practical activity, not abstract generalization. The primary goals of education are maintenance of the past, conformity, and provision of the necessities of life, in descending order."

The system of values implicit in Western education

runs strongly counter to traditional institutions, threatens the tribal authority structure, and consequently gives rise to strong opposition within the family and tribe. During the early stages of acculturation, the further the student progresses in his education, the more he revises his educational goals, and the more committed he becomes to the social and occupational aspirations associated with those goals. As this process continues, the inter-generational conflict progressively intensifies. By the time the student reaches high school and beyond, the intrafamilial strain may reach the point of rupture. The student comes to Monrovia to advance his education, but cannot count on any support from his family, either financial or psychological. Parental hostility toward the children's educational aspirations is most frequently expressed in the parents' conviction that once they have gone to school, their children "will get puffed up and have no more time to bother with us country people again."

This family estrangement has two major concomitants for the student. First, it generates further culture-specific anxiety that witchcraft procedures will be directed against him by members of his family or tribe who are envious of his achievements and angered by his flaunting of tribal authority. In Liberia, the most intense anxiety about "being witched" typically relates to one's immediate family members (Wintrob

and Wittkower, 1968). Many of these students become so convinced that they will be "poisoned," "witched," "humbugged by geni" or "troubled by bad medicine" and ultimately "turned crazy" by these methods, that they will not risk returning to their village to visit.

Second, an identity conflict develops and assumes a major role in the student's psychic functioning, as the student's aspirations increasingly polarize toward the "acculturated" identity model represented by his teachers and other individuals in the urban setting with whom he has progressively greater contact.[3] In keeping with this polarization of identity toward the Western, urban model, the student conceives of his education as the sine qua non for achievement and status in the urban society. He becomes increasingly anxious about the implications of failure in school that would require him to relinquish his goals and return to his village. Fears of retaliation by authority figures of kin group and tribe exacerbate fears of failure and may generate such intense anxiety that the student's ego defences collapse, as the following case illustrates.

Case One:

A sixteen-year old girl of the coastal Kru tribe was brought to the Center by the principal of the mission school she had been attending for the past six years. The girl had become very irritable and withdrawn during the previous month.

The symptoms appeared the day after she had written national competitive examinations to qualify for high school entrance. At first she complained only of feeling feverish, then of weakness and a tingling sensation in the head. Restlessness, irritability, anorexia, and intermittent insomnia followed. She began to laugh inappropriately. The principal decided to seek psychiatric help when the patient became abusive and then aggressive toward her peers and reported that she heard Jesus' voice instructing her to become a missionary.

The student confided that her classmates had been looking at her in a funny way and sometimes laughed at her or caused her to stumble so that her toes would bleed. She felt that her classmates were jealous of her because she was very pretty and had achieved the highest academic standing in her class. She felt certain that they wanted to make her lose her mind and were poisoning her food in an effort to kill her.

This girl had always been the top student in her class. The principal confirmed that she had in fact obtained one of the highest marks in Liberia on the high school entrance exams, although she had not yet been officially informed of her outstanding success. She is the oldest of five siblings, the first to attend school, and the only member of the family who has lived away from their village and outside the Kru territory. Her father is a fisherman. She had been supported by the mission from the beginning and had been consistently

favoured by the principal, who regarded the girl as a ward. She had not visited her family for nearly three years.

Her condition improved rapidly on tranquilizing drugs. As her thinking cleared, she spoke about having been extremely worried that she might not have done well enough in the exams to get the scholarship she needed to attend high school. She was afraid that if she failed to win the scholarship she would be forced to return to her village to help her mother take care of the household and their small cassava farm. She had set her hopes on becoming a school teacher or a nurse.

The attitude of strong opposition to education on the part of the authority-wielding generation in the traditional tribal milieu undergoing early acculturative changes becomes modified as further socio-cultural change occurs. Direct opposition to education decreases and an attitude of highly charged ambivalence develops. This stage is reached when parents tolerate or even encourage one or more of their children to attend schools in their village or region. The parents will want these children to stop school when it is time for them to attend the initiation "bush school" or when they have had sufficient formal education to enable them to communicate with the regional representatives of government and commerce. If these students want to continue their education and are able to neutralize opposition within the family toward this end,

they will be expected to begin contributing materially to the support of the kin group while they continue their education. In addition to the sources of anxiety described earlier, these individuals feel that the demands and expectations of their kin are too much for them to cope with; for instance, that they should act as guardian and provider for younger siblings and other kin sent to them "to learn book." Role conflict creates great anxiety in many of these students, since they are expected to assume the full burden of traditional adult responsibilities long before they have completed their studies and could be in a position to shoulder adult obligations realistically. Even before these students have completed their education they are expected to repay the family which had permitted them to "become civilized" (educated) by contributing to the material support and aggrandizement of the entire kin group.

III. THE CREE: EDUCATION, IDENTITY CONFLICT AND PSYCHOPATHOLOGY

Early in 1966 a study of socio-economic change and political development among the approximately fifteen hundred Cree Indians of the Waswanipi and Mistassini bands was initiated by McGill University's Programme in the Anthropology of Development. The study, involving anthropologists, sociologists, and a psychiatrist, will continue for a three-year period. The

Cree Indians under study inhabit an extensive sub-arctic region south and east of James Bay and more than 400 miles north of Montreal.[4] The Waswanipi and Mistassini Cree were selected because their traditional life pattern, based on hunting, trapping, and fishing, is undergoing important changes as a result of recent large-scale forestry and mining operations in the region, the introduction of roads and communications, and the decline in fur prices (Chance, 1967).[5] Government programmes are promoting adult education and vocational training. While adult roles are affected primarily by economic changes in the region, traditional patterns of enculturation are undergoing important modification as a result of changes in the educational experiences of Cree youth.[6]

In the past, some children received formal education during the summer when individual hunting-trapping groups came together to rest, secure provisions, socialize and celebrate marriages after nine months of isolated bush life. However, as a result of the government's decision to work toward the complete integration of Indians within the mainstream of Canadian life, during the past five to ten years there has been an increasing tendency for all school-age children to attend government sponsored residential schools in "white" urban communities.[7]

During their pre-school years, traditional models

for identification are provided by parents, grandparents, and adults of the extended kin group. Children are expected to learn adult role behaviour through imitation and experimentation; there is little emphasis on direct instruction. Children are given responsibility in accordance with their performance of tasks having a clearly defined usefulness to the family and hunting group (Rogers and Rogers, 1963; Sindell, 1967). Expected adult behaviour modalities are reflected in boys' play activity, such as chopping wood, hunting birds and setting snares for rabbits and other small game. Girls help with household tasks such as collecting firewood, gathering spruce boughs for the tent floor, and washing clothes. Discipline is mild and indirect, taking the form of teasing or ridicule, occasionally reinforced by threats of retribution by spirits or by fearful figures of the white world. Appropriate behaviour involves self-reliance, inventiveness and inhibition of emotional expressivity. Cooperation with peers is stressed while competition with peers is discouraged. The cultural emphasis on generosity and on effort directed toward the benefit of the kin and hunting group is reinforced by religious values. It is fundamental to the Cree belief system that spiritual power (Miteo) is shared by all objects, animate and inanimate, and that the "soul spirit" (Mistabeo) guiding a man's behaviour "is pleased with generosity,

kindness and help to others" (Speck, 1935). The Cree believe that satisfaction of an individual's Mistabeo through generosity will be rewarded by success in hunting.

Throughout this early period of enculturation the child's contacts with non-Indians are limited to the personnel of the Hudson Bay Company store, the Anglican (Episcopalian) minister, the Indian Affairs agent, and tourists who come to the region to fish and hunt. Perhaps the most meaningful figures of the "white" world conceptualized by the pre-school child are the Wabinkiyu, an evil spirit somewhat akin to a bogeyman, and the nurse. When gentle discipline does not succeed in controlling a child's misbehaviour, parents may threaten him with being carried off by a Wabinkiyu, or being taken to the nurse for an injection.

With the shift from traditional milieu to the setting of the "white" urban residential school, the child is removed from the family at the time he or she is becoming competent to assume responsibilities within the hunting group or for the care of the household and younger siblings. The child is required to learn a new language, eat "store food" rather than "bush food," abide by a wide range of rules and a time structure completely at odds with his previous experience. His teachers and dormitory counselors know relatively little of his Indian social and cultural background and conceive of their role as

preparing him for life in a modern industrial society (Sindell, 1967; Chance, 1967). Traditional Cree values, beliefs and behaviour patterns tend to be covertly and sometimes overtly devalued by whites with whom the students come in contact. Compliance with rules of the school and dormitory limits exploratory, self-reliant behaviour. Emotional expressivity is encouraged, and so is competitiveness in scholastic performance, in athletics, and in other extra-curricular activities. Through contact with "white kids" at school and in town, and through their exposure to television, young Cree students learn that overt expression of aggression is condoned. As the child continues his schooling over a number of years, marked differences develop between the child's behaviour and attitudinal patterns and those expected of him by his parents. Prolonged separation from the traditional life of family and tribe, extended over the six, eight, ten, or even twelve years of his school career, makes it practically impossible for a boy to learn the age-appropriate hunting and trapping skills. Girls are unable to learn the techniques required for helping a man on the trap line, for preparing furs for sale or moose hides for moccasins, for making snow-shoes or repairing fishing nets. Students have little opportunity and decreasing motivation to develop traditionally approved social and occupational role behaviour. Furthermore,

as they continue their education, these Cree youths acquire a growing knowledge of and familiarity with the life-style of the white urban society that surrounds them. Their understanding of the white world is greatly enhanced by the fact that at the high school level, all Cree students live with white foster families and attend schools in the community where they are living. As time goes on, the attitudes, beliefs, and behaviour patterns of the townspeople, especially those of their teachers, counselors, and foster families, come to serve as models for identification. And these models contrast sharply with the traditional models of the students' pre-school experience.

Conflicting role expectations between home and school could be expected to engender role anxiety in the children involved. The intensity of the anxiety experienced by individual children would be a function of the degree to which the child equated his repeated separations from family with feelings of rejection, and the degree to which supportive relationships are established with those teachers, dormitory counselors and foster families who could be expected to fill the role of surrogate parents.

As the student continues his educational career, the discontinuities between school and reserve become sufficiently wide-ranging and intense that they may give rise to

marked anxiety. Intergenerational conflict reaches a peak toward adolescence as parents become painfully aware of the student's resistance to the traditional life and of his very close association with his student peer group. Accordingly the parents exert increasing pressure on their children to stop school and return to the reserve to assume traditional adult roles and responsibilities, to contribute to the support and well-being of the family, "to learn the Indian ways."

The inter-generational conflict unfolds on a conscious level. But at the same time, an identity conflict assumes an increasingly important part in these students' emotional life as they attempt to resolve the largely unconscious conflict over models for identification that they feel are incompatible: the traditional Cree, and the "white" Euro-Canadian (Wintrob, 1967b). For those students who attempt to resolve their identity conflict through a polarization toward the "white" identity model, feelings of inadequacy and fears of failure in achieving their occupational and social aspirations in the white world may combine with a growing awareness of condescension and prejudice by whites to generate intense anxiety. Symptoms of emotional turmoil become clinically discernible when the student's wishes to continue his education bring him into open or suppressed conflict with his family, a conflict that may be deeply disturbing

to the student, as the following case illustrates.

Case Two:

The subject is a high school student who was interviewed during the last month of the school term, before she was to return to the reserve for the summer. She is the youngest of three siblings, but has several younger half-siblings from her father's second marriage. An older brother who has not attended school is a trapper and a member of his father's hunting group. Her mother died and her father remarried when the subject was nine years old.

This girl likes school and wants to continue. However, she was reluctant to discuss her plans for the future, saying that it was a secret, or that she had never thought about it. She confided that she wanted to "try and finish grade eleven and then take nursing, if I don't change my mind." She thought she would eventually like "to live in a town in southern Ontario. But if I lived there I would lose contact with my - I mean - I'd lose contact with the Indian ways." She felt that she might like her husband to be a lawyer or a teacher; "any work as long as he had a well-paying job."

She touched several times on feelings of tension in contacts with white students. "They sometimes tease us and make fun of us, so I just usually talk to the kids in

my class and not to the others." She often feels very nervous when she is with people she doesn't know, has great difficulty making friends with white peers, and to a lesser extent with Indians. She has few friends, Indian or white.

The reason for her reluctance to discuss her aspirations became apparent when she grew quiet and looked very sad when asked about how her parents felt about her going to school. Holding back tears, she whispered that her father "never talks to me about it, but he wants me to stay home and help around the house." She thought that her step-mother also was opposed to her continuing her education.

Speaking about going home for the summer, she broke into tears and sobbed throughout the remainder of the interview. She said that she felt extremely unhappy and ill-at-ease at the reserve. And as she spoke about home, her family, and school, she made two highly significant slips of the tongue. In the first, she said that she couldn't make up her mind "to quit school or to stop. I mean, to quit school or finish it." And, explaining why she had begun to cry, she said: "I often cry when I think about my father. He died when I was just young." She did not realize she had made the 'mistake' of saying father rather than mother.

She cried bitterly as she talked about her father's attitude toward her education. "Before we left for school,

my parents wanted me to stop. The last three days we were at home, my father scolded me and I didn't know where to go to. Even that morning we were supposed to go to school, my father scolded me. He didn't even say good-bye to me. All of the other kids had money from their parents, and I didn't have anything. But I like my father. When I go back (home) I'll try and be good." She also talked about her stepmother. "Ever since I was nine years old I felt that she didn't care for me; not like the other kids." Occasionally she would confide in one of her friends, and had tried to talk with her dormitory counselor and 'house mother.' But she felt that none of them really understood her. "They just listened. No one can help me."

In this case there is evidence of marked depression. Feelings of hopelessness and helplessness are prominent. A sense of emotional isolation has resulted from 1) her long-standing feelings of rejection by her stepmother, 2) the mounting conflict with her father over her education and ultimately her identity role, 3) her feelings of insecurity and fears of rejection in interaction with whites whose life-style she wishes to emulate, and 4) her inability to draw support from peer group relationships, either Indian or white. Feelings of guilt have been aroused in relation to the conflict with her father, further intensifying the identity conflict

she is experiencing. She has polarized strongly toward the white identity model, but in view of her father's opposition to her pursuing the goal she has set for herself, feelings of despair and marked anxiety have built up.

Inevitably, returning to school further strengthens the commitment of students like this to the white identity model. Just as inevitably it raises the emotional stakes and the risk of serious decompensation if such students are unable to achieve the goals they have set for themselves. If parental opposition were such that students like the one cited were obliged to return to live in the traditional setting, they would be faced with the real or imagined reactive hostility of the tribe (or more precisely, that band of the tribe to which they belong), in addition to their own feelings of failure and the devalued self-image that would ensue. What happens in such circumstances can be seen from the following case history.

Case Three:

The subject is a young woman in her early twenties, who has been living with her family on the reserve since she stopped school several years ago. She had been very eager to continue in high school, but at the insistence of her father she did not return at the end of the summer vacation period. Her older brother, like her father, is a trapper

and has never attended school. For several years her mother had been pressing her to stay home to help with the care of the younger children and the heavy burden of housework. The subject herself had hoped to become a teacher or secretary.

For at least two years people at the reserve had considered the subject's behaviour and attitudes to be strange. She showed very little interest in traditional activities of cleaning and stretching furs, setting rabbit snares, sewing, collecting firewood, etc. At times she would withdraw from all social interaction to the point of being completely mute. During the six months prior to my interview with her, her behaviour had become more obviously disturbed and had provoked considerable anxiety in the community. One informant remarked that "everybody is afraid they might be going crazy themselves." During this period she sometimes remained completely mute and curled up in bed for days on end, showing no interest in anything or anyone, including her own personal hygiene and food intake. At other times she would have outbursts of unprovoked aggressivity directed primarily against her mother, who had remained at the reserve settlement to look after the disturbed daughter when the rest of the family left for their trapping grounds.

During the previous year this young woman had frequently turned to the reserve's white school teacher and

his wife because of her feelings of estrangement toward the traditional life which she felt had been thrust upon her when her family insisted that she stop attending school. About six months before I interviewed her she had written the school teacher's wife the following letter. "Could I please work at your place again. It would help me a little to overcome my shyness. Because right now I can't bear it when people talk about me being shy. When I'm near them they are not very nice. They are not real mean though, like they were before. So could you please let me work at your place for my sake. I have no definite personality right now, so give me a personality. I know I am asking lots but please help me."

During the interview she was very guarded and refused to talk to me alone or to take off her coat. She was thin and dishevelled, sat hunched over, and spoke with great hesitation. Questions had to be repeated several times before any sort of reply could be elicited. She spoke about hearing Jesus' voice but refused to specify the content of what she heard Jesus say. Her affect was labile, with considerable inappropriate laughing. Grimacing was evident. She denied the possibility that she might be ill in any way. The clinical picture pointed to the probable diagnosis of acute schizophrenic reaction, catatonic type.

In this case the identity conflict was manifest. People spoke about her not knowing whether she was white or Indian. She had tended to polarize her identity toward the white middle class model personified by the school teacher's wife, to whom she appeals to be given a personality, with the implication: "a personality like yours." She was conscious of what she felt was the community hostility that had been aroused by her wanting to "be white." It became impossible for her to gratify wishes for both community approval and "white" role identity. In an effort to control her own aggressive impulses and avoid retaliation from the environment, she has relinquished her aspirations and progressively withdrawn from social interaction. But these introjective defences have been inadequate to contain her anxiety, and massive ego regression followed.

IV. A COMPARISON OF FINDINGS

In order to clarify the data on inter-generational and identity conflict of Cree and Liberian students experiencing conditions of rapid socio-cultural change, comparisons will be drawn along three parameters: 1) attitudes toward education, 2) the influence of beliefs in witchcraft and spirit possession, and 3) defence mechanisms employed to cope with role conflict. Finally, the question of resolution

of identity conflict is considered and hypotheses formulated for further study.

Attitudes Toward Education

A four stage scale can be constructed to account for modifications in adult attitudes toward education under the impact of acculturative changes, ranging from strong opposition through stages of ambivalence and selective valuation of the student, to a final position of projective identification with the student. These stages may be seen to roughly correspond to the student's achievement level (Figure 1). It should be borne in mind, however, that while one particular stage may be characteristic of a society at a given point in time, there will inevitably be some degree of attitudinal variation within that society.

The process of culture change is initiated by limited but increasing contact of one culture with another. Traditional societies begin to interface with, but not interact with, elements of the "Western" industrial society. This 'interface' period is characterized by guarded exploration and bemused curiosity about the attitudes and behaviour of the unfamiliar group, but meaningful communication and mutual learning are extremely limited. As culture contact increases and the system of education of

Figure 1

Scale of attitudes toward education

Student Achievement Level	Stage of Adult Valuation of Student
limited language skills (minimal literacy)	opposition (initial interface experiences)
advanced language skills (fluency and literacy)	ambivalence (cultural broker experiences)
limited occupational skills (trades)	selective valuation (family aggrandizement)
advanced occupational skills (managerial and professional)	projective identification (reflected prestige)

the industrial society is introduced, conflict with the traditional enculturation process, its educational methods and its authority structure results in firm opposition to the encroaching educational system. This stage of strong resistance to children breaking with tradition in the context of education was representative of the Mistassini Cree until the present decade. It is encountered among some Liberian tribes, but is not characteristic of those coastal and interior tribes which have been exposed to the major thrust of recent developments in Liberia.

As socio-cultural change proceeds, the stage of opposition shades into that of ambivalence. At this stage the adults of the tribe remain opposed to prolonged education and insist that children stop school after two, three, or four years, in order to fully participate in the traditional religious and economic life of the tribe. However, they recognize a need that some members of the tribe should be able to communicate effectively with representatives of the "Western" culture; government officials, potential employers, storekeepers, and others with whom there is increasing frequency and depth of contact. Students who have become skilled in speaking and writing English (or French) become valued as "cultural brokers" (Geertz, 1963; Paine, 1967), thus making it unnecessary for the adults of the interacting

cultures to develop the kind of close contact that is anxiety-provoking to both. To the extent that the student's role as "cultural broker" arouses feelings of resentment and inadequacy in those adults of the tribe who become dependent on him, the inter-generational conflict will be exacerbated and adult ambivalence toward the student and toward formal education will be intensified. The feeling will then predominate in the tribe that a few years of schooling are useful, but that students should return to the tribe in sufficient time to learn traditional adult roles. This is the position most characteristic of the Cree at present, and is seen with some frequency in Liberia as well.

The following stage of "selective valuation" is widely encountered in Liberia, but is just emerging as an important stage for the Cree. The student has achieved limited occupational ability and can function as a skilled or semi-skilled worker; as a heavy-equipment operator or miner, draughtsman, carpenter or electrician. Female students are able to fill jobs as office or store clerks, secretaries or nursing assistants. At this point geographical mobility has often occurred, with a shift toward urban life style. The extended family begins to conceive of the student as an important source of material support. Parents begin to recognize the economic potential of education and urge their children

to go to school so that they will be able to get a good job. A wide range of fantasies focus on the student as one whose level of interaction and integration with the dominant culture is such that he can arrange for the provision of employment, education, social welfare, and other services to whichever members of the family call on him for assistance.[9] The student feels obliged to comply with these unrealistic family expectations. The anxiety aroused by this situation becomes incapacitating for those students who feel caught in a vise between the desire to pursue their education and the mounting demands of their family. The student feels obliged to comply with these unrealistic family expectations, but there is a sharp distinction between Cree and Liberian students with respect to the motivation underlying these feelings of obligation. Cree students are motivated by profound feelings of responsibility toward the kin group, based on the internalized culturally-synotic valuation of generosity. Liberian students on the other hand, are primarily motivated by fears of retaliation by the kin group and the profound need to neutralize the threat of reprisal by witchcraft induced by angry relatives.

The final stage of attitudinal change is represented by projective identification. At this stage the student has achieved a level of education that prepares him for managerial or professional status, and the potential for successful

integration in the urban industrial society. At the same time, continuing intercultural contact has encouraged a shift in values among the adults of the tribe, such that their status within the tribe, as well as their emotional gratification, is measured to an important degree by the acculturative success of their offspring. In Liberia this pattern is just emerging at present, while for the Cree it has not yet become identifiable in any meaningful sense.

The Influence of Witchcraft and Spirit Possession

Beliefs in witchcraft and spirit possession are fundamental to most Liberian tribes and play a decisive role in shaping behaviour. Fears of being witched, or being "humbugged by geni" dominate interpersonal relations. These beliefs cross generational boundaries and are shared by virtually all members of the tribe. The desire to protect oneself from malevolent practices initiated by jealous peers or relatives encourages guardedness and inhibits cooperation. There is a strong tendency to interpret adversity of all kinds in terms of witchcraft.

In contrast to Liberia, beliefs in witchcraft and spirit possession do not permeate Cree culture and shape interpersonal relations to the same degree. The fundamental difference in witchcraft beliefs is that the Cree do not attribute

responsibility for witchcraft to their own kin, but rather to members of another band within the tribe or to non-kin within their own band. Such beliefs do exist however, and come prominently into play at times when isolated hunting groups are faced with the threat of starvation. At such times it is often felt that malevolent shamans have invoked witchcraft to drive the beaver, moose, and bear away from the hunters (Speck, 1935). It is also believed that when faced with starvation some hunters would become possessed by the cannibalistic "Witiko" monster (Landes, 1938; Hallowell, 1938; Parker, 1960; Fogelson, 1965). Hallowell stresses that fear of serious illness or accident occurring in the isolation of the hunting territory could generate intense anxiety, and it is likely that even slow recovery from minor illness would be interpreted in terms of witchcraft (Hallowell, 1938). But the strength of these beliefs has diminished to the extent that adversity, illness and death attributed to external influence is far more a feature of the older generation of Cree than it is of the student generation.

Role Conflict and Mechanisms of Defense

In comparing case history materials from Liberia and the Cree, it emerges that differences in the cultural belief systems are reflected in the characteristic defense

mechanisms utilized to cope with anxiety generated by role conflict. In Liberia, where witchcraft beliefs continue to play a dominant role in the psychic organization, intense anxiety is defended against by denial and projection. Liberian students who come to identify with the value system of the urban, industrial society through their pursuit of Western education, are acutely aware that they are defying tradition and drawing upon themselves the hostility of their elders and many of their peers. Owing to their dependence on group approval (Collomb, 1967) and their tendency toward superego projection (Wintrob and Wittkower, 1968), this hostility is felt to be a grave threat to their physical and mental well-being. Fears of academic failure that would necessitate the student's return to a potentially hostile kin group and tribal authority system are repressed and denied. Aggressive retaliatory impulses toward authority figures and competing peers, to which those fears of failure give rise, are projected and emerge into conscious expression as convictions of witchcraft intervention or spirit possession. Fears of failure and of tribal retribution are thus re-interpreted in magical terms in accordance with an internalized traditional belief system, as evidence of external interference with the student's competent functioning. These projective mechanisms serve to arouse sympathy and support and neutralize

hostility among family and peers, since the student's beliefs are readily understood and shared by the tribe (Wintrob, 1967c). This in turn may relieve the student's anxiety to the point that he may either become reintegrated within the family and tribe, or be better able to direct his emotional energies toward his academic goals. It is only if the student's identity conflict is of such magnitude that these defences are insufficient to cope with the anxiety aroused by it that the defences miscarry and ego regression follows, as in the case of the young Kru girl cited.

For the Cree students, fears of being harmed by witchcraft do not assume a central role in psychic functioning. But individual competence, self-reliance, and sensitivity to the needs of the kin group are of major importance, and conflict in identity role brings with it considerable anxiety over these important elements of the student's self-image. Threats to the student's self-image, provoked by fears of failure and feelings of inadequacy in his educational aspirations, are reinforced by feelings of guilt over his continuing inability to contribute to the support of his family. His increasing reluctance to fulfill the traditional role expectations of his kin group exacerbates feelings of guilt and contributes to a growing fear of rejection by his family. The degree to which feelings of guilt and fears of rejection constitute a threat to the

stability of the student's self-image will depend on the extent of family opposition to the student's aspirations. Aggressive impulses aroused by these threats to the student's self-image are dealt with by means of introjection, rather than projection as in Liberia. Spiralling feelings of guilt over insensitivity to the needs of the family, and anxiety about rejection by the kin group, give rise to a sense of hopeless isolation, as in the cases of the two Cree students cited.

Where introjective defences miscarry, regression tends to follow a pattern of gradual withdrawal into catatonic stupor, rather than the rapid development of aggressive, grandiose and paranoid manifestations typical of Liberian students. These differences in defense mechanisms and in manifest psychopathology reflect the essential distinguishing features of cultural emphasis on cooperation and responsibility toward the group on the part of the Cree, in contrast to the preoccupation with witchcraft and suspiciousness toward the group characteristic of Liberian tribes.

The Resolution of Identity Conflict

Is it possible, building on comparative descriptive findings on identity conflict for Cree and Liberian students, to advance hypotheses concerning the possible means of

resolution of identity conflict among students experiencing conditions of rapid social and cultural change?[10]

Preliminary analysis of available data suggests that attempts at an unconscious level to resolve identity conflict follow one of three major directions: 1) polarization toward the "acculturated" identity model represented by the working class or middle class individual in an urban, industrial society; 2) polarization toward the "traditional" identity model represented by the older generation of the tribe; or 3) a synthesis of the two models. It is hypothesized that the factors determining the direction of conflict resolution in individual cases will be: a) the age at which the individual starts school, b) the extent to which the student has internalized feelings of rejection in family relationships during pre-school years, c) the degree to which he develops positive affective ties with teachers, counselors, foster families, or other individuals who serve as identity models representative of the industrial society, d) the attitude of the kin group toward the student's educational aspirations, or otherwise expressed, the degree of inter-generational conflict over formal education, and e) the extent to which the student's aspirations are consistent with his potential to achieve them. Detailed information is presently being collected and analyzed on these factors as they influence

a group of one hundred Cree adolescent students of the Waswanipi and Mistassini bands.[11] Preliminary analysis suggests that successful synthesis of identity models requires relatively conflict-free pre-school family relationships, parental support or at least absence of opposition toward the student's educational goals, positive affective relationships with individuals representative of the industrial society, and availability of resources that would allow for the achievement of occupational goals and for status recognition within the industrial society. In relation to the last two points, it is hypothesized that as acculturation proceeds, older siblings who have completed their education will increasingly serve as models for the students of the synthesis of identity roles. And to the extent that these older siblings are able to work through the intra-familial conflict generated by their own educational aspirations, siblings currently in school will encounter less family opposition. But these factors will depend on the availability of desirable employment possibilities within or close to the region inhabited by the tribe, so that status recognition will be possible within the context of the extended family and the tribe. It will also depend on the degree to which the urban, industrial society is prepared to accord recognition and status to those tribal youths whose education and skills have equipped them for active participation.

It can readily be seen that this favorable combination of factors is not often present and sufficiently vigorous to be effective. It follows from this that under circumstances of rapid socio-cultural change, students experiencing identity conflict could be expected to display a relatively high incidence of psychological dysadaptation. It is hoped that our further data on this subject will clarify the validity of these hypotheses.

FOOTNOTES

1. The sharp contrast with the past is apparent even from the titles of the best known descriptive accounts of Liberia prior to World War II: Graham Greene's fascinating Journey Without Maps (1936) and Schwab and Harley's Tribes of the Liberian Hinterland (1947). In contrast to these works are recent accounts by Fraenkel (1964) and Martinelli (1964).

2. Clinical psychiatric facilities were introduced in Liberia in 1961 with the construction of the 40-bed Catherine Mills Rehabilitation Center, followed in 1965 by the establishment of a mental health clinic. An unexpectedly high percentage of patients at the mental health clinic were students. During the first 18 months of its operation, students accounted for 38% of mental health clinic patients and comprised 13% of in-patients at the Catherine Mills Rehabilitation Center during that same period (Wintrob, E.P., 1966).

3. For tribal Liberians there are, in fact, two models for identification contrasting with the traditional one (of their pre-school experience). In addition to the "white" middle class model represented by foreign school teachers, missionaries, plantation and industrial personnel, there is another model for identification represented by the socially, economically, and

politically dominant Americo-Liberians. Sharp distinctions between tribal and Americo-Liberians were long maintained by law and practice, reinforced in consequence of repeated tribal revolt against Americo-Liberian authority and control (Fraenkel, 1964; Martinelli, 1964). Since it has long been necessary to have the support of the Americo-Liberian power bloc in order to advance one's education and ultimately one's career beyond the limits of the village and the tribe, it can readily be understood that the Americo-Liberian identity model internalized by the tribal Liberian gives rise to intensely ambivalent feelings (Wintrob, 1967a).

4. Preliminary research was financed by grants from Laval University's Centre d'Etudes Nordiques and McGill University's Committee on Northern Research. Support from the Canadian Department of Forestry and Rural Development made it possible to initiate this three year study in January, 1966.

5. Rising economic aspirations are reflected in the fact that in 1964 the entire population of the Waswanipi Band moved off their "reserve" in search of jobs in lumber camps or with mining prospectors.

6. The description of the traditional enculturation process and the impact of experiences during the child's early years at school is drawn in large measure from the work of my

colleague, Mr. Peter S. Sindell. For further details, reference should be made to his paper, "Some Discontinuities in the Enculturation of Mistassini Cree Children" (1967).

7. The generalized term "whites" as used by the Cree involves a wide range of associations. For the present purpose, the term "white" identity model refers to both working class and middle class Euro-Canadians, the former applying more particularly for Cree boys and the latter for Cree girls. A further division of working class and middle class identity models along the lines of French versus English Canadian would also be relevant, but is beyond the scope of this paper.

8. The clinical material on Cree students is drawn from interviews of Waswanipi and Mistassini Cree adolescents and young adults conducted during 1966 and 1967 at the La Tuque Indian Residential School (La Tuque, Quebec), at Mistassini Post, and at settlements in the Waswanipi region.

9. At this stage urban migration becomes a factor of significance and with it the high risk of integrative failure, powerlessness, rejection, and the other stigmata of the "culture of poverty" (Lewis, 1966).

10. One approach to this problem is taken by McQueen, who considers identity conflict as one important variable influencing

problem-solving among students in Nigeria, and has developed a paradigm to explain "predispositions of modernizing youth to resort to political and criminal solutions to their plight" (1967).

11. This work on education and identity conflict among Cree youth is being carried out by the author in association with Mr. Peter S. Sindell, Department of Anthropology, Stanford University. Financial support for this research has been provided by the Laidlaw Foundation (of Canada).

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